

## Planning Board Hearing on Roads in Carlisle

July 30, 1968

Present were: H. Hosmer J. Macone D. Spaulding Approximately 60 residents  
C. Evans F. Smith T. Herndon of Carlisle

The object of this hearing was for the Planning Board to learn about public opinion on the general character of the new roads being built in town.

A main topic of discussion was that of new road width, which centered around whether or not the present 24' requirement was appropriate and what changes in that width requirement might be advisable. Of those in the audience who spoke to this point, 15 were in favor of retaining the 24' requirement, and 7 felt that 24' was too wide. No one desired a road width in excess of 24', but there were several comments to the effect that two widths, 24' for long roads serving a substantial number of houses, and a lesser width for short roads serving a few houses, would be advisable.

Salient points expressed in this regard included the suggestion that a 24' sub-grade and foundation be required with a 18' to 20' wide pavement, which could later be widened if traffic conditions warranted it. Another comment recommended three street width classifications from 18' to 24', with properly located turnouts for school busses. It was also felt by some that the location of utility poles should be controlled to prevent them from being placed too near the pavement. There were several comments that wide shoulders on roads was advisable, for adequate snow removal and to serve as foot paths. However, others felt that wide shoulders were aesthetically displeasing, and should not be used. There was a good deal of interest in the aesthetics of Carlisle's roads, stemming from the desire to maintain a rural aspect for the street system, but also provide satisfactory roads, with the term "satisfactory" having a number of meanings. It was also suggested that the Planning Board be given fairly broad discretion in specific road width requirements, which would provide flexibility, and also give more "bargaining power" in its dealings with developers.

A second area of interest was the condition and layout of existing town roads. In this area there was a wide difference of opinion, keyed closely to individual interpretations of "safety". One school of thought was that wide, straight roads carrying commuter traffic encouraged speeds which are unsafe, and therefore, such roads should be narrower, curved and bumpy to reduce the speed of traffic. The opposing camp felt that narrow, curved and bumpy roads promoted accidents due to poor visibility, insufficient passing width and the possibility of the vehicle being thrown out of control by holes or humps in the road surface. Another argument given for country roads was that through traffic would increase if road improvements were made, and that this was not necessarily desirable. The rebuttal to this pointed out that our road system is a part of an area road system, and that Carlisle has a reciprocal responsibility with surrounding communities to provide proper roads for through traffic. Of those who spoke to this topic, 10 were in favor of improving "bad" corners and surfaces in existing town ways, while 6 either felt that such roads should either be left as is, or made rougher.

The sidelights in this discussion included comments that walking or bicycling paths should be installed along the major existing town ways as a safety feature. The suggestion was also made that some town body should take on the responsibility of scheduling improvements on existing roads in an orderly and logical fashion, and on a year by year basis. Another suggestion was made to the effect that the road surface should be adequately grainy to prevent slippery conditions during wet weather. With regard to commuter traffic, it was proposed that such traffic be "channeled" through town by providing a few good, straight roads for this traffic,

and leaving the remaining roads in a relatively unimproved condition to discourage their use by commuters. It was also felt that the installation of appropriate traffic signs along such roads would be a good safety measure. Along the same line, someone noted that better clearing of obstructions at intersections to improve visibility would be advisable. It was suggested that a consultant be retained to provide a traffic pattern - road width plan for the Town as a whole. Finally, several people expressed reservations as to how much road improvement Carlisle could afford to pay for and thought that this aspect should be carefully weighed before undertaking any major improvement policy.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry O. Herndon